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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000590

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [ASEC](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT OUTLINES LEGISLATIVE  
GOALS, DISCUSSES SECURITY

REF: A. KINSHASA 530  
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 545  
[1](#)C. KINSHASA 582

Classified By: Poloff KRBel for reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. In a wide-ranging meeting with the Ambassador on May 29, National Assembly president Vital Kamerhe outlined his legislative goals for the remainder of the ordinary session and for an additional, already-scheduled extraordinary session. He highlighted six significant pieces of legislation which he hopes to have passed by September. He also discussed the troubled security situation in eastern Congo and the need for systemic and leadership changes in FARDC. End summary.

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LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) In a cordial meeting with the Ambassador on May 29, Vital Kamerhe discussed his immediate goals for the National Assembly. The first legislative hurdle facing the Assembly is passage of the \$2.1 billion budget (septel). Kamerhe described the budget as "realistic" and "responsive," although he admits that it only begins to address the enormous needs of the country.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The current regular session of the Assembly is slated to end on June 15, but Kamerhe said an extraordinary session is already scheduled to open on June 25 and end in early September. While the National Assembly recently ranked 66 key priorities, Kamerhe frankly admitted that his real goal is the passage of six significant pieces of legislation by the end of the extraordinary session. In addition to passing the budget, Kamerhe hopes to pass laws formalizing: the role of the opposition, the structures for decentralization, the creation of the high council of magistrates, the governance of the media, and the creation of the successor to the independent election commission. He conceded that this was ambitious, but stated that it was necessary to deliver on some large projects quickly in order to convince Congolese that progress is being made. If he succeeded, he joked, he would consider his "mission accomplished."

[1](#)4. (C) Kamerhe addressed the Assembly's relations with the Senate, which recently elected its new permanent bureau, including its independent but opposition-aligned president, Kengo wa Dondo (ref A). Kamerhe anticipated some difficulties in working with an opposition president, but stated that he has already met three times with Kengo, once privately and twice in official settings. Kamerhe agreed

that the opposition's role is to critique government policies, but said he hopes the Senate will avoid taking an obstructionist tack just for the pleasure of criticism.

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SECURITY  
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15. (C) Kamerhe acknowledged widespread security concerns and heightened tensions in eastern Congo. He commented on the difficult situation in South Kivu "on the plateau" in Minembwe with attempts to convince dissident Banyamulenge forces to integrate into the FARDC (ref B), and the resultant limitations on the movement of goods and people in the region. Kamerhe also touched on the general uneasiness in the region surrounding the "mixage" of renegade General Nkunda's troops. He stated that Nkunda must "pay the price" for his previous actions, and insisted that Nkunda's former officers must integrate completely (rather than just "mix") into the FARDC. Kamerhe asserted that a broad re-structuring of the FARDC was necessary; he was blunt in his criticism of current FARDC leadership and stated that many of the officers need to be replaced. He disparaged Air Force Commander John Numbi by name.

16. (C) Kamerhe also talked about the security problems in South Kivu, including the recent massacre of villagers outside of Bukavu (ref C) and the continuing presence of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Acknowledging that the FDLR is "a large problem," he is nevertheless convinced that many younger FDLR members want to return to Rwanda. He believes that one significant problem is access; a core group of senior (and presumably more deeply

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implicated) FDLR members resists return of any members and may be reluctant to lose the "shield" effect afforded by the presence of their comrades and dependents. Kamerhe said the situation is fractured, and that the ex-Interahamwe fighters "exploit the confusion." As with other regional security concerns, Kamerhe noted the FDLR problem has "external links" with neighboring countries, and said resolution of the issue will require a joint approach.

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) Kamerhe remains accessible and open, and expressed appreciation of the Ambassador's "show of interest and support." His legislative goals are admittedly ambitious, but his assessment was shrewd: the government needs to start delivering. He is equally astute in his assessment of the need for change in the FARDC. Kamerhe's rather blunt criticism of the FARDC senior leadership is unusual, but essentially correct. It is also consistent with signals President Kabila has been conveying for some time that a change in senior military appointments is in the works. The timing, however, is not clear and like many difficult decisions, appears already susceptible to delay. End comment.  
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